

72/74 CLASS NEWS

✉ "There were about twenty rigs and a great time was had by all. Happy hour every afternoon, multiple shopping forays into Key West, a kayak tour, a sunset cruise, and great camaraderie. Even though we were newbies we were welcomed with open arms and enjoyed ourselves immensely. If you own an RV you owe it to yourself to leave winter hibernation for a week and join us next year - 5-12 February 2018 - put it on your calendar now! There's an RV Chapter Web page (usnarv.us-nachapters.net) and a Facebook page (USNA RV Chapter) - check it out."



The Key West Come-Around...RV Style

On a sad note, we learned that **James Howell** passed away in February. James was born June 22, 1949 in Morristown, TN and graduated from Oak Ridge High School. He briefly attended USNA as a member of our Class, and subsequently graduated from the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Following graduation he served in the Peace Corps in Swaziland, Africa. He is survived by his mother, stepfather, son, daughter, brother, sister, aunts, nieces, nephews and cousins. The Class extends its sincerest sympathy to his family.

That's about it for this month, folks. Enjoy the beautiful season and drop me a line when you get a chance. More to come. D. O.

Tried and True With '72.

'73

Life Membership: 63%
Donor Participation: 4.58%

Pres: **Kevin Callahan**

Sec'y: **CAPT James H. Chapman, USN (Ret.)**
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Hello everyone, I hope you are all doing well. I am glad winter is over although it was a pretty mild one in

Virginia Beach. I have some exciting news about one of our classmates so let's get to it.

Congratulations to **Eric Olson** for selection as a Distinguished Graduate by the Alumni Association! Eric is the Class's first DG and I'll paraphrase from the alumni association announcement; "Each year, the Alumni Association honors distinguished graduates because of their demonstrated and unselfish commitment to a lifetime of service, their personal character and the significant contributions they have made to the Navy and Marine Corps or as leaders in industry or government." Eric, On behalf of the Class, Thank you for your service and dedication to the Nation. BZ! and our heartiest congratulations!

The recognition ceremony was 31 March. Hopefully I will get some pictures to pass on.

Over the years there have been questions about exposure to Agent Orange. Some classmates have had symptoms and tried to file claims with the Veterans Administration. Here is a letter from **Kevin Callahan** on this very important issue;

✉ USNA 73er Classmates, In the past couple of years through the present, the following has been brought to my attention:

The two West Coast ships on board which approximately half of us were assigned for Youngster Cruise, the USS Cleveland and USS Vancouver are on the official "exposed to Agent Orange list."

There is a list of various medical conditions which the US Government recognizes that are assumed, may have been caused by exposure to Agent Orange.

(<http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/>)

A yet unknown number of our Classmates are displaying the symptoms associated with those health issues and have sought health care benefits and compensation from the V.A.

If you were on board either of those two ships for Youngster Cruise and have any of the health issues associated with any of those conditions, you rate seeking

immediate health care assistance and compensation from the V.A.

The best course of action is for you to contact the closest V.A. Medical Center or satellite health care office and/or a US Military Service advocacy representative for advice. We are also familiar with, and have on hand, the documents you will need to file a claim and how the process works. You can email me and I will: (1) send you the documents; and (2) guide you on a course of action to take and/or put you in direct contact with a Classmate (Bill Short, billshort@earthlink.net) who can accomplish that. Copies of the deck log and the ship's manifest for VANCOUVER sailors are also available at our class website (<http://www.usna1973.com/>).

This may be of particular importance for those 73ers who did not accomplish a USN or USMC career and do not have access to Tri-care and/or V.A. health care. Why? Because as long as you were on board either of those two ships for Youngster Cruise when they were in port in Danang, Vietnam and you have the symptoms associated with the designated Agent Orange related conditions, you rate submitting a claim for health care and possible compensation.

I would like to give a special thank you to **Bill Short** who has worked this very hard and put in a lot of time to bring us this information.

That's all the news. The "inbox" is empty. I hope you have a good summer and as always, Go Navy and Semper Fi! General

'74

Life Membership: 56%
Donor Participation: 3.39%

Pres: **John Yaeger**

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It's been just four weeks since the last column was submitted, and there is very little news to report. For better or for worse, I suspect most of you are still in shock with the result of last November's election.

David and Deborah Oyster

(8th Co.) have spent the last several weeks touring Australia and New Zealand. David was good enough to forward some photos, but directly from his cell phone, and the format is not transferable here. So use your imagination.

In the last several days I have been the recipient of, or been copied on, several e-mails from **Fred Stuvek, John Brown and Mike Donovan** (all of 26th Co.). In an all too common vein, the reason for the many e-mails is the passing of a classmate, **David (Bear) Marra**, also of 26th Co. Bear was a unique and colorful guy. You only needed to hear him laugh once to know how much he enjoyed life. Fred has taken the time to put together a letter to our class in remembrance of Bear, and I'd like to share it in total here:

✉ I first met David "Bear" Marra at the Pittsburgh Airport in June of 1969 when we boarded a Mohawk Airlines flight in Pittsburgh. We were both on our way to Chicago to attend boot camp at Great Lakes, Illinois with our eventual duty station being the Naval Academy Prep School in Bainbridge, Maryland. On this flight was a fairly large contingent from Western Pennsylvania, many of whom were recruited for athletics. NAPS was a means to improve our board scores and learn about military life while improving our athletic and physical skills playing collegiate level. It was not a coincidence that about 75% of us were destined to play a varsity sport at Navy.

As we were standing in the gate area getting ready to board the flight a large figure came up to me and introduced himself. He said his name was David Marra but all of his friends called him Bear. To the best of my recollection I have never referred to him as David. He was always Bear, or The Bear.

Bear was a highly accomplished athlete and widely recruited football player coming out of Belle Vernon High School in Western Pennsylvania. He was selected to play in the Big 33 All Star Game in Pennsylvania, an annual event which pitted the top high school athletes from West-